

Twenty years ago, on September 21, President Clinton signed the National and Community Service Trust Act of 1993, establishing the Corporation for National and Community Services and its three main programs: AmeriCorps, Senior Corps, and Learn and Serve America.

In Illinois and across the Nation, volunteers of all ages and backgrounds are stepping up to help others. More than 800,000 people have served as AmeriCorps members since 1994, and more than 1 billion hours have been invested in improving lives and strengthening communities. In Illinois, 30,000 Illinois residents have served 37 million hours through AmeriCorps, qualifying for Segal AmeriCorps Education awards of \$93 million.

This year, more than 3,600 Illinoisans joined AmeriCorps to engage in results-driven service that meet education, environmental, health, economic, and other pressing needs in communities across our State. Young men and women in AmeriCorps accept challenging assignments in tough towns and neighborhoods.

When the town of Joplin, MO, was devastated by a tornado in 2011, AmeriCorps members from Belleville, IL, helped with the recovery effort and with rebuilding the community. When low-income families are cash-strapped and hungry during the holidays, members of AmeriCorps prepare festive and nutritious meals at a community center in their neighborhood. Some volunteers have collected used children's books for underserved preschool programs in southern Illinois communities. AmeriCorps members have provided tutors and mentors to strengthen literacy programs in approximately 30 local grade schools.

These are a few examples of the service we see from AmeriCorps members. For their hard work, we pay them a few cents more than minimum wage and give them an educational grant to help fund their college expense.

In 2009, President Barack Obama signed the Edward M. Kennedy Serve America Act to expand AmeriCorps and volunteer opportunities in six key areas: disaster services, economic opportunity, education, environmental stewardship, healthy futures, and veterans and military families. I was honored to join my colleagues in support of this legislation and President Obama's national call to service.

These volunteer hours and this commitment can make a tremendous difference in giving people some hope and in giving them the basics that they need to survive. That volunteer spirit is part of America. It is an American value we cherish.

I urge my colleagues to join me in recognizing the hard work of these volunteers as the AmeriCorps celebrates its 20th anniversary.

ENERGY SAVINGS AND INDUSTRIAL COMPETITIVENESS ACT

FOREST PRODUCTS

Mr. PORTMAN. Mr. President, I appreciate the opportunity to speak today and offer some clarity about the treatment of wood products in the amendment that Senator WICKER and Senator LANDRIEU have offered with regard to green building standards. I commend Senator WICKER for his hard work on this amendment, which will update the current EISA statute to reflect the evolution of green building rating systems and create a more strategic approach for the Federal Government so that we have the highest performing, most efficient, and most cost-effective buildings while also taking advantage of an abundant domestic resource.

Mr. WICKER. The amendment I have introduced with Senator LANDRIEU addresses a number of issues that are important to America's forest products industry. In particular, the amendment specifies that the Department of Energy and the General Services Administration must allow the use of multiple green building rating systems. A voluntary standard endorsed by the Federal Government can wield immense influence over green building specifications in the Federal sector and broader commercial marketplace. DOE and GSA must support competition and allow the free market to produce the best energy-efficient buildings at the lowest costs.

The intention of section 406(3)(G) of our amendment is to direct GSA and DOE to adopt a policy that provides equitable treatment to all domestic sources of sustainable wood. It is simply unacceptable for the Federal Government to endorse a standard that discriminates against domestically sourced, sustainable U.S. wood.

Wood is an ideal green building material because it is renewable, stores carbon, and is energy efficient. According to objective criteria, the majority of the domestic wood products industry is sustainably managed and endorsed internationally. In addition, the forest products industry employs nearly 1 million men and women in well-paying jobs, including more than 123,000 in my home State of Mississippi. There is no reason to shut out the wood products being produced in our own backyard in favor of imported substitutes. Our intention is to provide an equal playing field that keeps Mississippi wood—as well as wood from other states—a vital component of federal green building policy.

Mr. PORTMAN. I agree with the Senator. We have a lot of hard-working Americans who are employed by this industry, and we need to ensure that there is a level playing field for them so that the Federal Government's green building policy doesn't stand in the way of bringing sustainably produced domestic wood to market. I would also emphasize that wood is a vital component of sound architectural

design and construction, in addition to being a renewable resource that sequesters huge amounts of carbon. This amendment strengthens our bill by making clear that green building programs avoid discriminatory or arbitrary provisions and ensuring that they consider environmental impacts across the entire life cycle of a building material or product by incorporating Life Cycle Assessment.

Mr. WICKER. I thank the Senator. We believe this amendment is a step forward to ensure GSA and DOE's green building policies support domestically sourced wood. I look forward to working with the Senator and committee leadership as this legislation moves forward.

MESSAGES FROM THE PRESIDENT

Messages from the President of the United States were communicated to the Senate by Mr. Williams, one of his secretaries.

EXECUTIVE MESSAGES REFERRED

As in executive session the Presiding Officer laid before the Senate messages from the President of the United States submitting sundry nominations which were referred to the appropriate committees.

(The messages received today are printed at the end of the Senate proceedings.)

MESSAGES FROM THE HOUSE

At 2:03 p.m., a message from the House of Representatives, delivered by Mr. Novotny, one of its reading clerks, announced that the House has passed the following bill and joint resolution, in which it requests the concurrence of the Senate:

H.R. 3102. An act to amend the Food and Nutrition Act of 2008; and for other purposes.

H. J. Res. 59. Joint resolution making continuing appropriations for fiscal year 2014, and for other purposes.

At 2:23 p.m., a message from the House of Representatives, delivered by Mrs. Cole, one of its reading clerks, announced that the House has passed the following bill, in which it requests the concurrence of the Senate:

H.R. 1526. An act to restore employment and educational opportunities in, and improve the economic stability of, counties containing National Forest System land, while also reducing Forest Service management costs, by ensuring that such counties have a dependable source of revenue from National Forest System land, to provide a temporary extension of the Secure Rural Schools and Community Self-Determination Act of 2000, and for other purposes.

MEASURES REFERRED

The following bill was read the first and the second times by unanimous consent, and referred as indicated:

H.R. 1526. An act to restore employment and educational opportunities in, and improve the economic stability of, counties